



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Thirsty Times



Bishop Nick Takes Up New Residence

Chelmsford and Mid-Essex Branch of
CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 008
Winter 2013

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Pub News

Reports in Pub News are provided by local CAMRA members, licensees and Thirsty Times readers. Further news of changes at local pubs is very welcome. Please send news to news@chelmsfordcamra.org.uk.

It's "Goodbye" to our friends Peter and Elaine at the Windmill, Chatham Green. They have not moved far – to the Red Lion at Finchingfield, so our loss is North West Essex's gain. They intend to continue to offer beers from Growler, Wibblers & Brentwood. The Windmill has featured in our 'Recommended Pubs' guide since 2009 so we will miss them and wish them well in their new venture.

Another Goodbye is in the offing as Dave & Maggie at the Woolpack in Chelmsford will be leaving in May 2014 after 9 years at the pub. More on this in our next issue but Dave assures me it's business as usual until then, including a first mini Winter Beer Festival from 27th to 29th December featuring mainly Christmas ales and winter warmers but with a 9 of Summer Lightning for those with Seasonal Affective Disorder! The monthly open mic night will be held on the final evening.



The Wagon & Horses in Braintree has a new landlord – David, who also runs the Orange Tree in Braintree. The

pub was relaunched in November with a Halloween beer festival. The pub will feature local real ales and home cooked food.

The Albert in Witham remains closed following the fire but the owners – Star Pubs & Bars (Heineken) - are refurbishing it and it will reopen in the New Year as a pub with a

restaurant, and a new name – The Railway.

A sign of the times? Greene King have put 2 pubs up for sale – The Queen's Head in Braintree and the Rose & Crown in Bocking – as their new pub, Branocs Tree at nearby



Great Notley, opens. This Hungry Horse establishment was full of diners from

day one but there is a small area for drinkers with 2 GK and a guest ale available. If you hadn't guessed Branoc's Tree may have been the origin of the name for Braintree.

Elsewhere in Braintree the Silkworm has closed. Its owners – The Bramwell Pub Company – have gone into administration.

The 'Proud of our Ale' festival at the Golden Fleece in Chelmsford was "a phenomenal



success" reports landlord Brett, with sales increased by 90% over last year. 50 different ales were featured.

The good news is

that the Fleece continues to offer CAMRA members 20% discount off their ales. During December the '12 ales of Christmas' will feature Christmas ales from many different breweries. As usual over Christmas they will have lots of entertainment on and entry will be free on all nights including Christmas and New Year's Eve. The Fleece continues to raise money for Cancer Research UK, £2,500 so far, with a new target of £3,000 by February 2014. www.thegoldenfleece-chelmsford.co.uk

Pub News

Continuing last issue's theme of Pubs and



Charity, not content with supporting one charity the customers at the Rodney, Little Baddow are raising money

for three, a Quiz Night for Farleigh Hospice (£100), Chocoholics, pool and a New Year's Eve do will bring in £300 for Help the Heroes, a firework display and crib £400 for the Essex Air Ambulance. Well done to them. If you're quick you can try their 3 course Christmas menu for only £12! <http://therodneyinn.co.uk>

Greek evenings with Bouzouki music have proved a resounding success at the Cricketers at Fryerning. See www.thecricketersfryerning.co.uk for details of the next one in January. In the run-up to Christmas they have 2 Abba Christmas Party Nights (you'll need to book a table) and good old-fashioned carol singing in the bar (with piano) on 16th December.

The Eagle at Galleywood held their first Beer, and Sausage, Festival in September. It was a great success with 20 beers, 12 types of sausage and live music in a marquee. Philip, the landlord, says he can't wait for next year. Keep up to date by going to <http://eaglepub.co.uk> and get details of their 70/80's Dinner and Disco on New Year's Eve.

The White Hart at Witham has been exten-



sively refurbished and is looking fantastic. A '12 days of Christmas' Beer Festival, starts on 13th December, running through to Christmas Day and features 20+ ales and ciders. Their new cask ale bar will be commissioned early in the New Year, increasing the number of ales on tap to 14! www.whitehartinwitham.co.uk

The Ale House, Chelmsford also continues



to offer an amazing range of beers plus live music on most Wednesdays and Saturdays in December. They are offering free admission on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve with no ticket required. www.alehousechelmsford.co.uk

Mixed fortunes for some of our recently closed pubs. It looks as though 2 of them may join the long list of conversions to supermarkets. After positive-looking planning applications for the King's Head in Braintree it now looks likely to become a Tesco.

Also the Brakspear pub in Witham – the Jack and Jenny, closed since 2011, is reported as sold to a property developer and Morrisons are looking to convert it to a supermarket.

Not far away though the new pub built by Marstons on Gershwin Boulevard – The Old Pottery Kiln - is scheduled to open as we go to press.

The ex-Ridleys Red Lion in New London Road has reopened as a restaurant – the New London. Another former Ridleys pub, the New Barn in Chelmsford, looks likely to

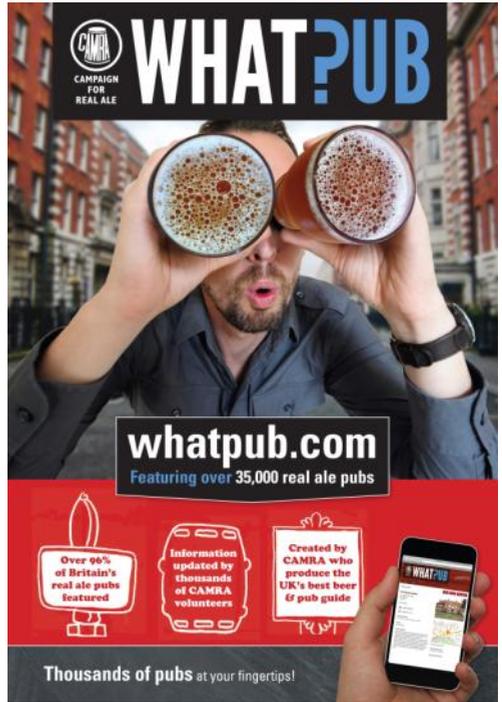
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be demolished and replaced by a mixture of house and flats; planning permission has been granted.

The former Royal Oak in Braintree has re-opened as The Pub. No reports yet.

The future also looks bright for the White Hart, Little Waltham which is still wrapped in scaffolding and obviously undergoing a lot of refurbishment. We believe it has been bought by the owners of the Axe & Compasses at Aythorpe Roding and the Angel & Harp at Great Dunmow, both of which offer a range of beers and good value food.

Just up the road, the St Anne's Castle at Great Leighs has a temporary manager who still offers 3 real ales whilst it awaits refurbishment to turn it into a "modern and stylish food destination outlet". We must wait and see ...



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Chelmsford Winter Beer and Cider Festival 2014

Here we go again we shout - Yes it's the best place to be: Chelmsford CAMRA Winter Beer and Cider Fest at KEGS in Chelmsford. Over 200 Beers, over 50 Ciders, International Beers, Local Wine and Hot and Cold Food. Certainly worth the visit to Chelmsford City!

Where and When

After the huge success of last year at the King Edward VI Grammar School we are back there again from Wednesday 19th – Saturday 22nd February 2014. We have the school gym as an extra room so we'll have more space and an extra 45 casks of beer this year.

Located five minutes' walk from the Bus and Railway Stations with Taxi rank, or you could even walk to and from home. If you find someone to drive you, we have free soft drinks for them as well.

What

Our Beer and Cider managers are re-searching to find beers and ciders from all over the country. It also gives them an excuse to go to the pub and other festivals, but seriously they do go out their way to try and find something different. Our Cider Manager was in Herefordshire, East Anglia and Scotland this year to find Cider and Perries. Even to my surprise she found Scottish Cider, and our Beer Manager was in Edinburgh to research Scottish beers. Podge and his wonderful bar staff will be with us too. He will have a great range of Belgian and other international beers. Tim and his merry team from Hopleaf will be doing the food again this year offering Burgers, Hot Dogs, Chips, Homemade authentic Chillies and Curries. Try the mean Hot Chilli Sauce! Please ask if you have particular dietary requirements such as vegetarian or gluten free.

Who

All our CAMRA staff are volunteers and give up their time to build, serve at and take down the festival and do this for fun. The Committee have been planning the festival since September making sure it all goes to plan.

How

This year for the first time we will be using Beer Cards instead of cash at the bars as many other CAMRA festivals do. However if you wish to purchase beers from the International Bar you will need to use cash. We are making the change from cash to beer cards in an effort to speed up service at the bar and hence reduce queuing times. Beer cards can be used at further sessions in the week. We know people don't like change but please give this a try.

You will be able to buy the cards at the entrance and there will be at least one other place in the festival where you will be able to purchase them. At the entrance as you arrive for the first time we will be selling starter kits consisting of your entrance, glass deposit, programme and your beer card. Beer cards will be in units of £10. Anything you don't use on your beer card will be refundable or you can donate some or all to charity. When you get a drink you tell the member of staff the name of the beer and how much you want – pint, half or third. Hand your card to the member of staff who served you, they will cross off the cost of the drink before handing it back to you. If you do not have quite enough left on the card for your drink you can top it up with a small amount of change.

Sponsorship

To help advertise and promote this festival The Home Partnership Estate Agents will erect boards during January with their

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name, the dates and location of Chelmsford Winter Beer and Cider Festival. If you are willing to have one at your property please contact Claire Irons at cider@chelmsfordcamra.org.uk. They will remove the boards after the festival. We thank them very much for their support and publicity.

Thank you also to our other sponsors, The Square and Compasses at Fuller Street for sponsoring the Staff Shirts, Millwhites Cider

for sponsoring the Cider Bar, Round Tower Brewery and Podge's Belgian Beer Tours for sponsoring the glasses

Why

We have Great Beers, we have Cool Cider, we have international beers, we have local wines, we have good food, we have wonderful staff but what we really want is YOU. We are Campaigning to get more people to try Real Ale, Real Cider and Real Perry.



15th CHELMSFORD WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

19-22 February 2014

Central location five minutes from
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200 REAL ALES, OVER 50 CIDERS & PERRIES
A WIDE SELECTION OF INTERNATIONAL BEERS
HOT & COLD FOOD AVAILABLE ALL SESSIONS

Opening times

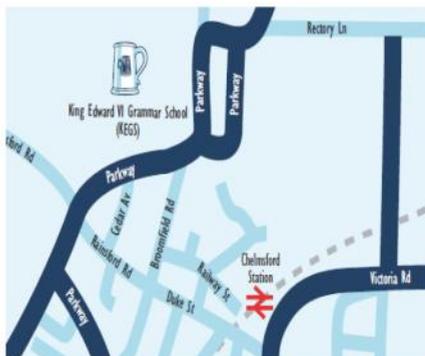
Wednesday 19th February – 5pm – 11pm
Thursday 20th February – 12 noon – 11pm
Friday 21st February – 12 noon – 11pm
Saturday 22nd February – 12 noon – 11pm

Admission

Card-carrying CAMRA members receive free entry

Non-members

Wed free entry
Thur – Sat free entry before 6pm
After 6pm Thur £3, Fri £5 & Sat £3.
Refundable Glass deposit £3



www.chelmsfordbeerandciderfestivals.org.uk

Brewery News

Crouch Vale

Olly Graham – 'Dun Crouchin'

After 26 years in the service of Crouch Vale including an exemplary spell at The Cap & Feathers in Tillingham, where he was manager when the pub won the ultimate accolade of 'CAMRA National Pub Of The Year' in 1989, Richard (Olly) Graham has hung up his computer, telephone and order book. He is on his way to a no doubt gentle retirement sampling the finer things in life, like lie-ins and foreign travel; indeed he intends spending December 2013 in Australia watching cricket.

Having been an employee of the brewery for all that time, he is unlikely to ever be beaten in terms of long service, and is currently only surpassed by Managing Director Colin Bocking, who was there at the inception in 1981. Olly's easy personality and jolly wit has won him friends all over the industry and made him an Essex real ale legend who was notably fighting on behalf of proper beer since the days when it was extremely hard to find.

We're sure you will all join us in wishing him a happy and fulfilling retirement and you must be sure to treat him to a pint when you see him, to thank him for over a quarter of a century of service to beer!

Dark Star Collaboration in March

Started on Twitter as a lark, rumours of a collaboration brew between Crouch Vale and Dark Star are in serious danger of turning out to be true, with a firm decision having been made that it will happen in March 2014 (unless it doesn't). There is no information as to the style of beer - the only other information is that it will take place in South Woodham Ferrers rather than Sussex.

Mighty Oak

Things seem to be going very well at Mighty Oak these days.

Ruth O'Neill MO's Director says "We have just finished our financial year and have seen sales increase yet again and have gained around 90 new trade customers over the last year. This next year is going to be an exciting one here at the brewery because we are expanding our plant

so that we will be able to brew even more of our wonderful beer! We will double our brew length so that we will not have to brew six days a week as we often do at the moment. We were so lucky that the building next door to us came on the market making it so much easier than having to find premises elsewhere!

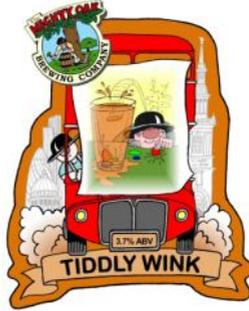
Brentwood

Brewery Celebrates Public Grand Opening with The Fruity Ruby

Plumberry Ruby Beer, the latest creation to come out of the mashing tuns at Brentwood Brewing Company, was chosen as the brewery's celebratory ale at their recent Grand Opening event. The fruity Ruby ale is the result of a collaboration between the brewery and Calcott Hall Farm.

"The idea fitted nicely with us moving to Calcott Hall Farm. They're renowned fruit growers so we thought we'd put some of their fruit into our renowned beer," said Brentwood Brewing Company Managing Director, Roland Kannor.

The brewery has now moved to Calcott Hall



Brewery News

Farm and bigger premises.

The new Plumberry Ruby Beer 4.6%, is full-bodied and has a smooth, fruity tang. It's well-balanced with a malty character and has a slight lasting bitterness.

Round Tower

Hannah at Round Tower reports: The end of 2013 is as exciting as the start for Round Tower Brewery. We had a great time meeting customers old and new at the launch of our bottle sales in Chelmsford High Street at the end of October. It was fun to chat with everyone and see such positive reactions to the tasters we provided, especially from Real Ale sceptics! Our bottled beers and gift packs are now available to buy directly from the brewery on Saturdays in December 1pm -4pm or at Lathcoates Farm all year round. We've also been selling our cask ale to new

customers across Essex including the Hoop in Stock and to some excellent Real Ale pubs across London. It's been exciting to see our beer on the bar alongside some of the UK's best and fitting in very nicely! We are still enjoying brewing lots of different beers but we are starting to brew a regular Stout (around 4.4%) as it's been so popular. Our range has recently included Lupuline Black (Black IPA 4.4%) with Australian hops, and Woodruff (4.8% American Brown Ale). For the perfect Christmas pint, we've made a special edition Shadoxhurst Stout at 5.6%. It's a small run so if you see it make sure you have a taste because it won't be around for long. Our first birthday is fast approaching in February so keep an eye out for a special celebratory brew at the CAMRA winter beer festival.

Hannah@RoundTowerBrewery.co.uk



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The Bishop Takes Up New Residence

Essex has swigged **Bishop Nick's** 'Sacred Ale' so eagerly that Nelion Ridley has invested in a new 20 barrel Brewhouse and signed a long-term lease for premises in East Braintree to craft more of the good stuff.



Since **Bishop Nick** officially launched as a craft brewery in September 2011, Nelion has been brewing on Franco Davanzo's 5 barrel plant at Felstar brewery near Felsted. They have enjoyed a supportive relationship and Felstar's hospitality afforded Nelion the opportunity to hone his skills and perfect his recipes before going it alone and scaling up production by 500%.

Bishop Nick's three regular ales have been embraced very quickly by the cask ale market throughout the county and beyond.



"Initially, I think we were pushing open doors - thanks to the ground-swell of

support for Ridley's in Essex - but repeat orders indicate that we are brewing good beer and that people are coming back for more. This is really gratifying." said Nelion Ridley, great, great, great grandson of Tho-

mas Dixon Ridley, who originally fired up the kettles in Hartford End, on the banks of the



River Chelmer, brewing for the good people of Essex in 1842.

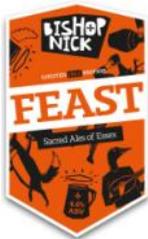
Ridleys was bought by Greene King in April 2005 complete with name and graphic identity, so Nelion, employed by the family

brewery for 15years, and his wife Libby, who has a marketing career behind her, collaborated with designers in London to come up with a new brand. Enter **Bishop Nick!** Bishop Nicholas Ridley, an ancestor of the family was burnt at the stake in 1555 by Queen Mary for sticking to his religious beliefs. His portrait was used in branding for Ridley's Bishop's Ale in the 1970s. Devoted to keeping Essex Ales sacred, Nelion thought it fitting to acknowledge his namesake when creating his new craft brewery.

So, with six generations of brewing in his blood, Nelion Ridley is back peddling ales and tales of Bishop Nick. As a tribute to his Ancestor's defiance, Nelion named his inaugural traditional best bitter **1555** – a sturdy 4.3% seriously full-bodied ale. He chose to create three traditional brews with vintage Ridley recipes close at hand but incorporating a nod to current tastes and trends.

Ridley's Rite (3.6%) fast became his leading brand - a good honest session beer with a subtle but satisfying bitterness and floral aroma. **Heresy** is a refreshing Golden Ale and at 4% delivers citrus and floral notes in abundance.

10 Seek out LocAles in your local pubs. Support your local breweries.



No longer restricted by capacity, **Bishop Nick** have added a seasonal range to complement their three core beers. The first on offer is **Feast**, a rich and fruity ruby red ale at 4.5% brewed with a German 'Cara Red' malt.

Wheels are in motion to also bottle their beers before too long.

Asked why he'd chosen Braintree Nelion replied: "Whilst we have ambitions to supply cask ale to wider East Anglia and neighbouring counties, we wanted to base ourselves close to our roots in mid-Essex. We already have loyal and enthusiastic customers locally and we have developed great working relationships with suppliers in the area. One point of interest is that we are the first commercial brewery in the town of Braintree for over 70 years and by a happy coincidence we find ourselves a stone's throw from the site where Ridley's once had a Maltings."



Indeed, **Bishop Nick** brewery is now conveniently located between Braintree Freeport and the town centre at a site on East Street. The Maltings referred to stood at the end of

neighbouring Manor Street and extended down to the railway. It was a 10 thousand quarter 'Floor Malting' built at the end of the 1800s. Incidentally, this labour-intensive operation provided work for prisoners from Chelmsford jail as part of a rehabilitation programme. Thomas Dixon Ridley had

about 17 working Maltings. The Chelmsford and Braintree sites were the biggest. The latter closed in the 1970s and in moved a plastic injection moulding company who made garden gnomes!!

A few yards away, Nelion and his Assistant Brewer George Cullen are already at home with their new brew kit supplied and installed by Olympus Automation this autumn. George, who has worked with Nelion at Felstar since the start-up, says "I'm really enjoying the challenge of scaling everything up to brew on this new kit. When we check our final gravities after a day's brew and we're hitting the right colours and all readings are where they should be, you know that the hard work and everything that has gone into the move has been worthwhile."

Nelion added "It really feels like the sky's the limit and I am much more confident in consistency of quality now that the process is more automated. Despite all the new shiny bells and whistles, we're still getting our hands (very) dirty so it's not lost its raw creative appeal as a craft. We'll be taking it in turns to clean out the mash tun though!"

Sacred Ales Abound: **Bishop Nick** ales are permanent stock at Joss Ridley's Essex CAMRA pub of the year *The Compasses* in Little Green. Other regular outlets include *The Prince of Wales* Broxted, *The Griffin* Halstead, *The Rose & Crown* Stansted Mountfitchet, *The Five Bells* Colne Engaine, *The Kings Head* Tollesbury, *The Cross Keys* White Notley, *The New Inn & New Town Tavern* Colchester, *The Lion Inn* Boreham, *Andrewsfield* airfield bar and many of the Gray & Sons estate notably *The Queen's Head*, Maldon and *The Orange Tree & Cricketers*, Chelmsford. For a comprehensive list of outlets see www.bishopnick.com

And for updates on new brews and progress reports etc...Bishop Nick are active on Facebook and Twitter @BishopNick

The C Word

Believe it or not, you can now even buy 'craft' bread. Craft this, craft that, craft the other: we are constantly being told that everything is 'craft', but what exactly does it mean? Does it mean anything? In the context of beer, the term is particularly confusing and contentious. Everyone has heard it, nobody is quite sure what it means, and everyone has their own idea - but the one thing that's clear is that 'The C Word' divides opinion.



Now that the 'craft beer revolution' is well and truly here (or so Brewdog would have us believe) we're now seeing many pubs offer a new 'craft beer' range. However, unhelpfully, what they often mean is that as well as a range of cask conditioned ales, they now serve some 'quality' keg beers. I use the term 'quality' deliberately to distinguish from the poor, tasteless yellow fizzy products which still dominate many bars.

In this context the pub manager is confusing the words 'craft' and 'keg' but for me a good cask beer from a smaller brewery is equally deserving of the description 'craft'. Care and attention, smallish production, high quality ingredients, no shortcuts, a brewer who has a name, and who you may one day meet and enjoy a beer with - these are the images conjured for me by the term 'craft'. But above all else, the image is one of good beer: interesting beer, made with quality ingredients, a beer with something to commend it, something about it. This for me is

the essence of craft.



Brewdog (another word which has been known to divide opinion) recently called for a clear definition of 'craft beer', with a view to promoting 'a clear legal definition for Craft Beer...to protect a product's reputation from poor imitations'. Their suggested one line definition is: 'craft beer is a beer brewed by a craft brewer at a craft brewery'. But this doesn't help us define what constitutes a craft beer or a craft brewer.

They go on to offer a proposed definition of a craft brewery, offering further clarity around authenticity, honesty, independence and commitment. Intriguingly, their own previous inclusion of size of brewery as one of the criteria has now been dropped from the revised second draft. Perhaps there's a risk of Brewdog getting too big to meet the criteria, hence size no longer being considered important?

Given that many larger breweries are now jumping on the craft beer bandwagon - a clear indication that the phrase might add value to a brand - I'd have thought that a criteria around size of brewery would make some sense. Indeed there is a large degree of cynicism about recent moves by Marston's - who recently launched their 'Revisionist' range, which includes a beer called 'Craft Lager' - and Greene King - whose IPA pump clip now boasts that it's 'hand crafted'. GK have also recently in-

vested £750,000 in a 30 barrel brewery for small batch and experimental beers - but is it possible for a brewery such as Marston's or Greene King to be 'craft'? Well if the beer is good enough then why not? On the other hand, Sierra Nevada are an example of a rather large brewery (in the top ten of all American breweries based on production) which still brews consistently and uniformly excellent beer, and which I certainly feel still deserves the description 'craft'. So perhaps a size criterion is not so helpful after all.

In fact the more you think about a definition for The C Word, the more you can see that it's extremely problematic to define: large breweries are certainly capable of brewing beers of exceptional quality; conversely, just because a brewery is small is no guarantee of high quality. Using the word craft to mask poor quality, especially if this approach is married to a higher price, does nobody any favours and simply increases the risk of reputational damage to the brewing sector.



So for me, the label 'craft' isn't necessarily particularly helpful. My choice of beer is always determined by its quality, rather than because someone describes it as craft. Having said that, when I hear of a bar which promotes itself as a 'craft beer bar' (such as the excellent new Flying Pig in East Dulwich or the Craft Beer Co - featured in the photographs) I am far more likely to be interested

in finding out more. The reason? Because it's also far more likely that a 'craft beer bar' will serve beers of interest to me - offering that 'something different' I am looking for - a quality beer of interest.

Once again therefore we are back to The Q Word: Quality, which for me is the key. Not the size of the brewery, not the method of dispense, not the artwork on the label, not the marketing budget: quality is everything - good beer is good beer.

And the same thing also applies to that loaf of 'craft' bread!

Written by Jezza, a beer drinker in SW London, who's in the process of putting his London Beer Guide on line. Follow Jezza on Twitter: @bonsvoeux1

DOMINION
BREWERY COMPANY
MISCELLANEA CERVISIA IN LIBROS ORBIS

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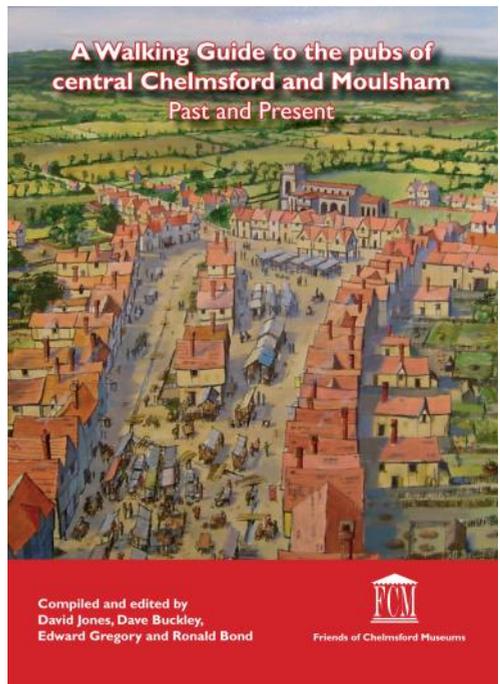
A Walking Guide to Chelmsford Pubs

Many readers will have heard from older drinkers about Chelmsford pubs as they used to be and lamented the loss of pubs depicted in copies of photos, many taken by Fred Spalding, which hang in some of the town's surviving pubs. However, you may know little about the precise location and history of these pubs and of the breweries that supplied them. If you want to know more a new guide titled [A Walking Guide to the pubs of Central Chelmsford and Moulsham: Past and Present](#) will be of interest to you.

The guide is in a handy 16 page pull-out leaflet and provides names for some 90 licenced premises that research has shown have existed within the study area over the past 500 years. Some were there for a long time, changed their name several times and have stories to tell while others disappeared long ago leaving little record. The front cover shows a reconstruction of the High Street based upon the Walker map of 1591 at which time Chelmsford had "many fayre innes". In Tindal Street alone it is known that every building down one side, where now there is only the High Chelmer precinct, was at one time or other a named drinking establishment. A view of the street as it used to be is one of the selection of photos, paintings and prints which illustrate the guide. If you want to know the answers to questions like which of the original fine Chelmsford coaching inns was named by Charles Dickens in his book *Pickwick Papers* after he stayed there; which other famous author wrote parts of some of his novels while staying at the Saracen's Head; which pub in Old Moulsham derives its rare name from the Moravians, a seventeenth century Protestant religious sect; or which pub landlord filled Chelmsford cathedral with the mourners for his funeral then you should read this guide. Other information of interest includes details of the local breweries and of the temperance movement and the pubs which became temperance houses.

The guide has been produced as part of the successful collaboration during 2013 between the Chelmsford and mid Essex branch of CAMRA and the Friends of Chelmsford Museums. It resulted in the exhibition *Ale and Hearty: The Pubs and Breweries of Chelmsford*. This was shown at Chelmsford Museum during May to September over which period 25,000 visitors to the museum were recorded. A booklet with the same name was issued to complement the exhibition (see www.aleandhearty.co.uk) and there were 4 special talks relating to brewing and its history.

Copies of the walking guide are available free of charge from Chelmsford Museums located in Oaklands Park, Moulsham; from Chelmsford Public Library, the Essex Record Office and some public houses in Chelmsford. The exhibition and both publications were made possible with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Obituary: Tony Dash



It is with great sadness that I have to write to say that one of our very long standing CAMRA members died on 8th September 2013. Tony Dash joined CAMRA in 1974 and was very proud of the fact that his membership number had only 4 digits (how many of us can claim that?). The Dash family are all CAMRA members and keen supporters of the campaign. Tony told his daughter when she was 20 that he was really proud that she had chosen real ale over alcopops. She in turn promised him two things ten years later, shortly before he died. Those two things were that she would continue to be involved with the Multiple Sclerosis Society and that she would continue to drink real ale.

Because Tony had MS this didn't deter him from visiting many beer festivals (usually several times) with his wife and other family members. And this brings me to something that his family and I would like to do and that is to gather information about pubs that are disabled-friendly. In his later years Tony was limited to going into pubs which had wheel-

chair access. He and his family managed to find some but their choice was limited. Not only does there need to be a way in that doesn't involve steps but there needs to be an accessible toilet and there needs to be parking close by. We are also interested in how much manoeuvrability there is once inside the pub. Tony and I talked about compiling such a list but we never got round to it. His family and I feel that it would be a fitting way to do something in his memory. We can then make sure that this information is passed on to others who have MS and others with mobility problems.

So please could you send details of any pubs with good accessibility to me at wbfstaffing@chelmsfordbeerandciderfestivals.org.uk. Many thanks.

Ann Davis



Tom Knox (head brewer)
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Cider Press by Claire Irons

The Puzzle of Perry

Sales of perry have been increasing over recent years with drinkers being more discerning about what they drink. Perry producers have to use the characteristics of the fruit to develop interesting and complex tastes and mouth feel.

A typical perry pear is small, gritty and virtually inedible due to the acidity (sourness) and astringency (tannin content which imparts a bitterness and dryness in the mouth). Grinding the fruit, traditionally with stone mills, and pressing the resulting pomace releases these characteristics. Pears with low levels of tannin and high sugar content make drinkable but bland perry. To make a dry perry the juice is left to ferment out completely, so little or no sugar is left as it has been used to produce the alcohol. For sweet perry the fermentation is arrested or particular varieties are used. Unlike cider perry should be made from ripe fruit, and preferably of only one variety. Once fermented however they may be blended with other single variety perries.

Blakeney Red This is probably the most common perry pear and is also used for pickling, canning and during the 1st World War by the dye industry to produce khaki. It is also known as Painted Lady, the Circus pear and Red Pear. In Blakeney it is called the Red Pear however the name is used for different varieties in other areas. In Dymock, Red Pear refers to Aylton Red. In Newent yet another pear is called the Dymock Red, however this pear in Upleadon is known as Billy Thurston's!



Moorcroft is known as Malvern Hills, Stinking Bishop and in some areas it is called Choke, This term was used historically for all pears that made perry in the same way that Styre was used to refer to all cider apples.

Rock is known as the Brown Huffcap in Hartpury and Tibberton this pear is called Red Huffcap in Newent, but Black Huffcap in Highnam! Perhaps it is understandable that in Haresfield and Arlingham it is called Mad Cap and in Bromsberrow Mad Pear, although this is more on account of its considerable potency than the erratic naming.

Brandy, Winnal Longdon, Red Longdon, Gregg's Pit, Thorn and Staunton Squash feature as single varieties but are often used in blends too.

Weird and Wonderful

There are hundreds of perry pears with



names reflecting the perry they produce such as Merrylegs, Mumblehead

Drunkers, Lumberskull and Devildrink. The one with the longest name is a bit of a mouthful : A Drop Of That Which Hangs Over The Wall.

Pondering what they have and how to make a wonderful mouthful is a puzzle for producers and prized by drinkers. Cheers!

Congratulations

Tom Oliver of Oliver's Cider and Perry in Ocle Pychard, Herefordshire has been awarded the Pomona Award 2013 for his hard work preserving the tradition of perry production and orchards.

Chelmsford's First Cider Festival



talise their taste buds and try Real Cider. 12 LocAles, 4 Local wines, soft drinks and live bands made a wonderful party atmosphere.

Over £300 was raised for the Charity Children with Cancer UK. Thanks go to Sidekick, Loaded Dice and vocalist Vanessa who entertained for free.

Chelmsford Cider Festival was held at The Triangle Club in Duke Street from Thursday 3rd until Saturday 5th October, which is National Cider and Perry month. Featuring cooled Real Cider, Perry (made from pear juice) and Pyder (made from apple and pear juice) from around the country with all styles and a delicious range of flavours it was a great celebration of the 25 years that CAMRA has been campaigning for Real Cider and Perry.

With a range of nearly 70 on the cider bar many regular attendees of the Chelmsford and Mid-Essex CAMRA festivals enjoyed the challenge of spotting which were the 25 which had not featured before.

The information regarding the 25 years of CAMRA Campaigning for Real Cider and Perry was backed up by details of the orcharding year; the production of real cider and perry, cider terminology; and education regarding traditional cider apples, along with maps and details of where to get real cider.

It was a great campaigning event with people travelling from around the country to attend having seen publicity at GBBF and various festivals around East Anglia. The Chill and Chat Room was appreciated by all ages from various walks of life with many curious beer drinkers being tempted to tan-

Thank you to our sponsors and supporters: The Ale House; Essex Cider Supplies; Felsted Vineyard; Home Partnership; King William IV and to The Square and Compasses who sponsored the LocAle Bar. As always thank you to all the CAMRA volunteers who contributed to the success of the festival.

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*Grant, Jo and Alison wish Chelmsford
& UKRA a successful Beer Festival*

Branch Diary

Wednesday 18th December 1st Walking Survey of Chelmsford Pubs for Good Beer Guide 2015. Meet at The Oddfellows Arms, Springfield Road at 8pm to leave by 8.30pm.

Tuesday 7th January Real Ale Runabout to Danbury, Cold Norton & Stow Maries. Bus departs opposite Railway station at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

Wednesday 15th January Branch Meeting at Barista, Chelmsford. No bus to this meeting which starts at 8.30pm.

Tuesday 21st January 2nd Walking Survey of Chelmsford Pubs for Good Beer Guide 2015. Meet at The Ivory Peg, New London Road at 8pm to leave by 8.30pm. See branch website for confirmation of date.

Wednesday 29th January Visit to Bishop Nick Brewery, Braintree. Bus departs opposite Railway station at 7.30pm, fare £9 members, £10 non-members. PLEASE

BOOK FOR THIS VISIT BY WEDNESDAY 22ND JANUARY.

Tuesday 4th February Real Ale Runabout to Stanway, Fordham & Mount Bures. Bus departs opposite Railway station at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

Wednesday 12th February Branch Meeting at The Orange Tree, Chelmsford. No bus to this meeting which starts at 8.30pm.

Wednesday 19th-Saturday 22nd February Chelmsford Winter Beer & Cider Festival 2014. King Edward VI Grammar School, Broomfield Road, Chelmsford. See the advert and article elsewhere in this issue for full information.

Tuesday 25th February Beer Cuisine Night at the Bell, Purleigh. Please see the branch website for the menu and booking details.



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01/06

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Thirsty Times

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**Deadline for Spring 2014
issue (009) is Wednesday 19th
February 2014.**

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Publication date for the Spring 2014 issue (009) is 12th March. If you run out of stock or have not received the next edition by 19th March please contact Derek Beaumont, 01245 264128, beaut62@tesco.net.

Selecting Pubs for the Good Beer Guide

For the last few months CAMRA members have been scoring the quality of beer in our pubs and entering the scores on the 'www.whatpub.com' website using the National Beer Scoring Scheme (NBSS).

Listed below are the top scoring pubs in the Chelmsford & Mid Essex area and these form the shortlist for selection to the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2015.

*The King William IV (Braintree),
The Walnut Tree (Broads Green),
The Windmill (Chatham Green),
The Ale House, Barista, The Cricketers,
The Endeavour, The Ivory Peg,
The Oddfellows Arms,
The Orange Tree, The Plough,
The Queens Head,
The Railway Tavern,
The Royal Steamer, The White Horse,
The Woolpack (Chelmsford),
The Square & Compasses (Fuller Street),
The Compasses (Littley Green),
The White Hart Inn (Margaretting Tye),
The Battersford Court,
The White Hart Hotel, The Woolpack (Witham),
The Wheatsheaf (Writtle).*

CAMRA members now have until 31st January 2014 to visit these pubs and choose the final 17 for the GBG.

What can you do next?

CAMRA members please continue scoring beers and entering the scores on 'www.whatpub.com'. Try to get to as many of the shortlisted pubs as possible and score their beers. The pubs will be aware that they have been shortlisted. Brian Debenham will also be organising a number of formal survey trips (see Branch Diary or www.chelmsfordcamra.org.uk for details).

For readers who do not belong to CAMRA please feel free to look at whatpub.com. You will find a wealth of information about most British pubs on the website. Or take this opportunity to join our branch at the website above.

The final selection

At the end of January 2014 the 17 top scoring pubs in the CME area using the NBSS will be selected for entry into the Good Beer Guide.

Things to remember

In order to increase the authenticity of scores members must name the brewery and beer when scoring each pub.

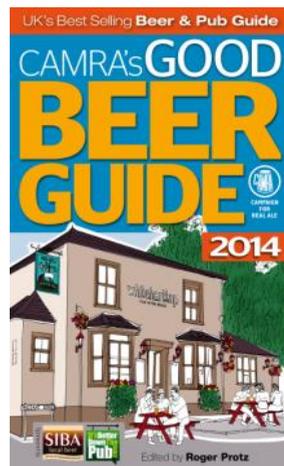
We are only selecting pubs for the GBG. The Pub of the Year (POTY) is selected under different criteria.

For those members without internet access paper scoring forms can be handed to Brian Debenham or any other committee member.

Can I take this opportunity to thank those members who have participated so far. This has been a radical change in the process of selecting pubs for the GBG and so far has gone on without any major hiccups.

Again, many thanks.

*Barrie Davis,
Chelmsford &
Mid Essex
CAMRA
NBSS
Co-ordinator.*



20 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

Birds, Boats and Beer



A hundred and seventy miles (3½ hours by car) west of Chelmsford lies the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust site at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire. Situated along the Severn estuary it is a great place to take the family to see a wide range of wetland birds in the wild. Here you can see exotic and endangered wildfowl along with recently introduced birds such as the crane. Nearby is the Gloucester and Sharpness canal. A fine place to walk or cycle along the towpath and watch the narrowboats. Boats and cycles can also be hired near the local shop and café.

However, next to the canal is the multi CAMRA award winning Tudor Arms pub. According to the certificates proudly displayed inside it has been Gloucester CAMRA area Country Pub of the Year 2007-11 and Pub of the Year 2012-13. Accommodation is available and the pub serves typical pub meals at reasonable prices. Behind the pub is a good quality camping and caravan site open and often full throughout the year. The pub now serves narrowboaters and campers as well as local and passing trade. I stayed at the campsite in mid-November.

The beers. The pub had six handpumps and

served nine ciders and perries on the nights I visited. I must admit that I tried five of the beers over three nights and they were all good. The first beer I tried was Uley Brewery's Pigs Ear Strong Beer, a pale ale at 5% ABV. I was somewhat underwhelmed on first tasting. Slightly sweet with some malt and fruit but lacking a hop balance for my liking. Interestingly, returning to the beer after eating a light meal it seemed better balanced and more complex. An example of food affecting taste buds? I scored it a 3 on the NBSS. Uley's Bitter at 4% ABV had a cleaner taste, was lighter with less fruit but with a balanced hoppiness. It was SW CAMRA's Gold winner 2013. I scored it 3.5 on the NBSS. North Cotswold Brewery's Shagweaver (4.5 % ABV) was light, slightly malty and well balanced with a peppery finish. (3 on the NBSS). A good session beer even at that strength. The pint of HPA (4.5% ABV) from Wye Valley had a few floaters which did not seem to affect the flavour. Light citrus hops balanced by some malt and sweetness. (3 on NBSS) My last drink was Palmer's '200' (5% ABV). Full bodied, malty and slightly sweet it was a well-balanced beer. It was my kind of drink. Something I could sit down and drink throughout the evening. The fact that it was only £2.50 a pint helped. So how to score it on the NBSS? We are supposed to score on quality and not on preference. This was the beer I liked best but scored it 3.5 on quality.

So little Slimbridge has quite a lot to offer. You can't miss the wildfowl in or out of the site. Walk or cycle along the canal and/or sit in a nice pub sipping good beer. Three good reasons to visit Slimbridge.

Barrie Davis

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